THE PASTIME.

No. 6.

Saturday, March 28, 1807.

Original Papers.

For the PASTIME.

SELF INTEREST.

MEN act from motives of self interest. True, we have heard of benevolence, philanthropy, and disinterestedness; but we have strong grounds to question whether these virtues were ever exercised by mortals, Self love is universally pronounced the governing principle in the human breast; and where that governs, pure benevolence, surely, has no place. Perhaps virtuous deeds have been done, through a mere love of virtue. Perhaps men have been good, because goodness is intrinsicly amiable: but, can we prove this to have been the case from what historians have transmitted to us, and from what we ourselves have seen?

Different persons have had different views in performing both virtuous, and vicious actions: but these views have been invariably bottomed on self interest. It may be asked, what can the giver of alms expect from the poor supplicant that begs his charity? Alas, how many miserable wretches must perish in want, if they could gain no aid but such as flows from genuine philanthropy! Mankind are more afraid of the reproaches of their fellow-beings, than compassionate for their sufferings. They bestow, not so much to relieve the oppressed and gain the applause of their own bosoms, as to have the credit of it in the world. The affections of the christian, do, undoubtedly, approach nearest to pure benevolence. But the christian remembers the promise of his reward.

THE GENIUS OF SHAKSPEARE AND MILTON CONTRASTED.

We are happy in being enabled to lay before our readers the following extract from a letter written by THOMAS DERMODY. To use the language of a brother journalist, "it rivals similar attemps of that Gog and Magog of literature, *Johnson*. It has all his point of comparison, without his asperities of diction; or, to reverse the period of a living author, the vigor of an oak without its nudosities."

The Italian writers compare the poem of Aristo to a garden of melons, where those that are good, are excellent, and those

that are bad, worth nothing. On the other hand, Tasso is assimilated to a bed of cucumbers; where all are ripe and sound, but destitute of that delicious relish, which pleases the most refined taste.

Shakspeare (to use this allusion) is a wild garden, where peaches, plums, and apples are found; some crude, some sour, some rotten, but some incomparable. He is a vineyard of plenty, where many of the finest branches are ruined for want of the pruning knife. Shakspeare, like the world, is full of good and evil; but his worst fare is so tempting, that we have not power to refrain from trying it. But the chaste, the sublime Milton is, like his own Eden,

"A happy rural seat of various view."

And his work is that fertile ground, out of which

"..... he caus'd to grow
"All trees of noblest kind; for sight, smell, taste;
"And all amid them stood the TREE OF LIFE,
"High, eminent, blooming ambrosial fruit
"Of vegetable gold."

Nature is so arranged by him, as to receive an additional lustre from art; and the exuberance of the earth appears more, than the labor of the cultivator.

Shakspeare, when he soars, is borne by the muse of fire beyond human sight; but Milton, in his grandest moments, retains the light of reason. His ecstacies are the ecstacies of a philosopher: Shakspeare's are the flights of an invisible being. Notwithstanding this, their spirits are somewhat congenial; for, allowing the variation of the epic from the dramatic, they move us by the same golden springs of pathos. In the art of exciting terror, I am not sure, but that Shakspeare is superior: For instance, the dream of Eve is painted rather tamely, though in just and beautiful colors; while Clarence's vision displays the inmost recesses of horror, apprehension, pity, judgment, and admirable fancy. The characters of *Satan* and *Macbeth* are both, indeed, extremely well managed, and, in my opinion, extremely alike: they have the same courage, the same undaunted ambition, uncurbed freedom of will, and spirited fortitude in the hour of destruction. They both are conscious of their ingratitude and wickedness; both stubborn and relentless, and, even in the midst of their success, they seem to feel a boding of the consequence. The address of the arch infidel to the sun is a noble description of the remorse attendant on conscience; it shows that even Lucifer himself could not but find its sting. Macbeth in almost every situation, confesses his guilt, yet plunges into deeds of tenfold horror. *Lady Macbeth* might be also introduced here; but female tenderness denies her savage temper. The most appar-

ent touch that distinguishes *Macbeth* from *Satan*, is in cowardice and mean prevarication; he exclaims,

"Thou canst not say I did it,"

to Banquo's ghost, because he only *commanded* his assassination: Milton's hero gloried in his undoing; and,

"fierce with grasped arms,
"Clash'd on his sounding shield the din of war,
"Hurling defiance to the vault of heav'n."

Shakspeare is like a cateract; at one time rushing through rocks and caverns, foaming and terrifying; then sinking into a sluggish calm, with nothing but the *bubbles* of his former sublimity. Milton is a full, not overflowing river; and, like the river to the sea, hastening towards his illustrious design, never pausing, and seldom dangerous to the passengers. The very foibles of one delusive and charming; but the other, if ever he should descend, is flat, and liable to inferiority from the nature of his performance.—The wild scenery of Shakspeare is the unconnected magic of Merlin, variously diverting; that of Milton is like Plato's *Elysium;* enchanting, yet built on the basis of an opinion, which bears the air of probability.

In a word, the former was a man of many faults and many virtues; the latter nearly a pattern of perfection—perfection attained by study and dint of learning. Shakspeare was the child of fancy; Milton the child of judgment. Milton was the poet and critic too. Shakspeare the poet only; but such an one as

"We ne'er shall look upon his like again."

Biography.

LIFE OF DERMODY.

[Continued.]

After unfolding the circumstances of his first acquaintance with Dermody, Dr. Houlton pursues his interesting narrative: but we are compelled, by the prescribed limits of our paper, to leave this engaging recital, and content ourselves with a brief outline of the story. With all the good Doctor's partiality for Dermody, he laments a spirit of resentment, and impatience of rebuke, which he manifested even on very slight occasions. It appears, indeed, from the whole tenor of his conduct, that he possessed that quickness of temper, which is almost inseparable from the tremulous sensibility of genius. Among other instances, his benefactor relates this: "I was once informed by the house maid that she repeatedly noticed a light in Dermody's room at a very late hour, and that going in on some pretext, she found him reading in bed, with a number of loose papers lying around him. Apprehensive of the consequence, I directed her to furnish him

only with a candle sufficient to light him to bed. A few mornings after Dermody took occasion to mention it by observing, that he believed his maid was very *careful*, as she allowed him but an inch of candle when he retired to rest, adding,

> The niggard taper yields its short-liv'd ray,
> And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

Without appearing to notice the sarcastic application, I shifted the conversation by observing, that I perceived he had read Gray's elegy. 'Yes sir.' replied he, 'often read it with tears, and I fancy the first verse of the epitaph will not be unsuitable for my own humble tomb stone.' Repeat, said I, the stanza; which he did, with an expression and pathos, that made an indeliable impression on my memory. I told him that his talents, with prudence of conduct, would certainly lead him to a better destiny. He answered, with a deep sigh, 'that the contrary presentiment was strong, and he could not divest himself of it.' A few days after this, my servant informed me, that she had found some candles in Dermody's room, behind his trunk. In consequence, I now thought it prudent to speak to him explicitly, on the danger of reading in bed. He took my remonstrance very ill; threw out a sarcastic observation on the unhappy state of dependence, and appeared sullen the whole of the ensuing day."

Unfortunately for Dermody, Dr. Houlton was soon after called upon professional business to a remote part of Ireland, and after his departure, being detained for a long time, he never again saw him. Previously to his setting away, he made several attempts to place his protege in a situation, where he might not be exposed to those distresses from which his humanity had resqued him. He fixed upon his friend Mr. French, as a person who would delight in the charge; but this arrangement was frustrated by learning that but a few days before that gentleman had gone to England. Hurried by the urgency of his business, Dr. H. could only supply Dermody with pecuniary aid: and *this* availed him but little. It was squandered in a few days, and he was again assailed by poverty, and again became an object of pity. Without a settled home he roved about the streets by day, and begged the meanest shelter during the night. While thus reduced, Dermody frequently wandered to the abode of an honest painter by the name of Coyle, who was formerly employed to decorate the house of his patron, and who, at that time, he often visited while at work, astonishing him with his historical knowledge: but tho' the artist had little knowledge of the subjects on which Dermody so learnedly expatiated, tho' he was ignorant even of the sublimity of his own profession, he had, what was equally honorable, a feeling heart. Our little outcast would not condescend to acknowledge that he was in want of food and clothing, though his hungry looks, and tattered habiliments, loudly betrayed it.

At length, when he could get no other assistance, he told his tale: and the humane painter urged him to come and share what little he could give him to eat and drink. Dermody informed his host that he had slept four nights in the streets; and had left his shirt as payment for his last lodgings. Mrs. C. redeemed it, and made him a pallet bed on the floor, at which he was pleased and grateful. Being out of his employment as scene painter to the theatre, and unable to keep a servant, Coyle was compelled to make him a substitute, to go on his common errands. His pride was silently hurt at this office, but he seldom murmured. Not long after, Coyle being restored to his situation in the theatre, became so much engaged, that he could not return home to his meals: his wife, therefore, sent Dermody every morning with his breakfast. At first he refused to go: but at length he grew familiar, went on messages, warmed size pots for his protector at the theatre, told merry tales, and wrote verses on the wall with chalk.

(To be continued.)

Variety.

..... "STEALING, and GIVING SWEETS."

A young sophimore, more notorious for his amours than his attention to the muses, courted a fair dame by the name of *Sally Love*. As soon as this came to his provident guardian's ears, he wrote him an affectionate letter, advising him to quit her as soon as he could with honor, and then court an alliance with *Sal-lust*.

A rich grocer who had retired from his shop, wrote under a devotional picture which ornamented a room in his country seat, the latin motto—"Respice finem." A French wag, to remind him of his origin, erased the initial R, and the final m; leaving, very appositely, "espice fine," *(fine spices.)*

In the funeral oration of Hewrietta, Queen of England, the character of Cromwell is delineated by a pencil of which the strokes are firm, tho' delicate—

"A man was seen with a profundity of mind that exceeds our belief. As finished a hypocrite as he was a skilful politician; capable of undertaking any thing, and of concealing what he undertook; equally indefatigable and active in peace as in war; who left nothing to fortune, which he could sieze from her by foresight and prudence; but, for what remained, always so vigilant, and so ready, that he never failed to improve the occasions she presented him. In a word, he was one of those daring and adventurous minds which seem born to change the affairs of this world."

The ambassador from the French Court in that day was an able minister; and that he was, at the same time, a fine writer, the following sketch of Cromwell evinces. It has the advantage of being given by one who was a witness to what he observes.—

"He was gentle and cruel when either was necessary for his interests. He had no faith in religion, no honor in his professions, no fidelity in his friends, than as the semblance of there virtues served towards his aggrandizement. He knew better than any man to put into practice all the pious grimaces and insinuating manners of the false votarists of religion; and to conceal, under an humble air and popular address, an unmeasurable ambition. In a word, he possessed, in the supreme degree, all the qualities of a great politician; and there was nothing wanting to compleat his good fortune, but to have acquired his success by better means, to have lived longer, and to have had children worthy of succeeding him."—*Curiosities of Literature.*

The Germans have given a happy effect to some of their poetry, by adopting many of the ancient measures. Klopstock's Messiah is written in hexameter verse: and they possess, among other pieces, translations from Horace and Anacreon, in which the original metres have been judiciously imitated. A scarcity, however, of long vowels, and an abundance of short syllables, has compelled them to tolerate the frequent substitution of trochees to spondees in hexameter lines; and they scan, like other nations, by emphasis, not by position. In the London Monthly Magazine, we read the transversion of a passage from Ossian's Carthon, which may give an idea of the practicability of such a custom applied to the English tongue.

Thou, who roll'st in the firmament, round as the shield of my fathers,
Whence is thy girdle of glory, O Sun! and thy light everlasting?
Forth thou cam'st in thy awful beauty; the stars at thy rising
Haste to their azure pavillions, the moon sinks pale in the waters;
But thou movest alone; who dareth to wander beside thee?
Oaks of the mountain decay, and the hard rock crumbles asunder;
Ocean shrinks, and again grows; lost is the moon in the heavens;
While thou ever remainest the same, to rejoice in thy brightness.
Although laden with storms be the wind, loud thunders be rolling,
Ligtnings be glaring around, thou look'st from the clouds in thy beauty,
Laughing the storm: but, alas! thou shinest in vain upon Ossian:
He no more may behold thy effulgency, whether thy fair locks
Yellowly curl on the clouds of the morning, or red in the west wave
Quivering dip. Yet thou perhaps but like me, for a season,
Finite e'en thy years—thou too shalt be sleeping in midnight,
Deaf to the voice of the morning. Exult, then, O Sun! in thy vigor:
Dark and unlovely is age, as the glimmering light of the moon-beams
Pale that shines thro' mists over-rolling the face of the grey sky,
When on the heath blasts sweep, and the sleet-vext traveller shivers.

Seddon, an eminent penman of the fifteenth century, having struck, by command of hand, a representation of St. George and the Dragon, exclaimed,

St. George's fame the universe doth fill,
Who, arm'd and mounted, did a dragon kill;
Then what must his, who sitting with a feather,
Dare strike St. George and Dragon both together.

Original Poetry.

We have procured a copy of the two Odes said to have been found some few years since in the Palatine Library, by the sub-librarian, Caspar Pallavicini, *and by many attributed to Horace. The first of these we this day present to our readers, with an elegant translation, from the pen of a friend. The second, we shall publish in our next.*

Ad Julium Florum.

Discolor grandem gravat uva ramum:
Instat autumnus; glacialis anno
Mox hyems volvente aderit, capillis
Horrida canis.

Jam licet nymphas trepide fugaces
Insequi, lento pede detinendas;
Et labris captæ, simulantis iram,
Oscula figi.

Jam licet vino madidos vetusto
De die lætum recitare carmen:
Flore, si te des hilarem, licebit
Sumere noctem.

Jam vide curas aquilone sparsas,
Mens viri fortis constat, utrum
Serius lethi citiusve tristis
Advolat hora.

[TRANSLATION.]

To Julius Florus.

With parti-colored clusters bends the bough:
Autumn is come; and while, like midnight trances,
Days flee away, with stern and hoary brow,
Winter advances.

Now is the time to catch, with tripping steps,
The nimble nymphs, whom the dull lounger misses;
Upon their sweetly smiling, yet reluctant lips
Imprinting kisses.

Now is the time to taste old Bacchus' joys,
Chanting, the live long day, some silver sonnet;
Night, too, shall hear my song, if the glad voice
Of Florus join it.

But lo, the cold and care-dispensing blast!
Yet come what will; or cares or death's sad fiat;
'Tis one. The soul of firm and virtuous cast
Knows no disquiet.

For the Pastime.

Mr. Editor—*The following lines are written in imitation of Propertius' second Elegy. As "the things which have been are now," the Stanza's apply as forcibly to modern ladies, as they formerly did to the fair damsels of the Augustan age.* *Yours, &c.*

Why do ye change your flowing hair
For artificial curls;
Why give ye to the wanton air
Such charms as fancy scarce would dare
To mingle with her dreams of love?
Why strive to please with borrow'd grace,
To 'snare us in the wiles of dress?
'Tis nature's modest art that charms;
Nature, the soul to rapture warms,

For oh! such trappings, rich and gay,
May steal a *husband*, not a *heart* away!

Look at the landscape, fresh and green,
The arbutes here and there appear,
And flowers, and shrubs, all sprining near,
And stately, tall, and waving trees,
Reflected in the brook between,
Where sweetly do the untaught birds,
Breath wild-notes to the whispering breeze!
Tell me, what noble soul
But would dash down the poison'd bowl,
Of midnight revelry,
To range without controul
In groves so pure as this, so beautiful and free!

Thus, oh ye fair, with YOU:
For Hippodemia's rosy blush,
Her most bewitching air,
Came from no beauty-making brush,
No lover-catching snare.
For know, if *art* could form a lass,
A sweetner to the draught of life,
Man to a *picture shop* could go,
And *buy* himself a wife. H.

To READERS AND CORRESPONDENTS.

By a mistake in arranging the matter of No. 5, the communication headed, "Local," was misplaced. It should have followed the Sketch of Italian Poetry. Some typographical errors of consequence will be noticed in the "Errata," at the end of Session.

The imitator of "Melertius" is requested to acquaint the Editors with the *history* of his favourite poet. When that is done, his verses shall appear with the titles which he gives them.

L. writes on a subject which does not fall within our cognizance. The respectable divine to whom he alludes, has, doubtless, good reasons for his conduct: and even were we convinced of its impropriety, we should decline noticing a practice, which can produce no bad effect, and which may be the means of banishing an indecorous custom.

The verses on Life, are rather trite. The writer discovers a taste for poetic composition, but it wants maturing.

The College subscribers who have not yet applied for their papers, are informed that the first impression of our numbers is nearly exhausted, and unless an application is made before Tuesday next, the numbers which have been reserved for them, must be disposed of indiscriminately, as they are applied for.

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